

## Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board Executive Director's Report

Meeting No. 227

April 24, 2019

1. Progress with planning support resources: In my previous reports I mentioned the planning support we're receiving from US Department of Labor and Advance CTE (Gates funding). Neither provides direct funding, but valuable consultant and technical assistance resources.
  - a. US Department of Labor Technical Assistance and Training (TAT) program is providing three consultants from Maher & Maher to facilitate four Rural Community Vitality Forums in Toppenish (April 23), Aberdeen (April 25), Colville (May 14), and Quincy (May 16), in addition to a fifth virtual Forum that pulls together what's been learned, slated for late May. The objective of these forums is to develop a set of recommendations for the Board to consider in TAP planning that would make workforce development services more accessible to our rural communities. The first forum, at the Yakama Nation Cultural Heritage Center in Toppenish, is scheduled the day before the Board meeting. I'll provide a brief overview of the event and how it went. Get more information on the forums, or consider attending one, at: <http://wtb.wa.gov/RuralCommunityVitalityForums.asp>
  - b. The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation provided a grant to Advance CTE, a membership organization of state leaders of CTE, to assist states with the development of their plans for the federal Carl Perkins program. Through this grant, Advance CTE is providing us with about 185 hours of consulting services to support the Perkins/TAP planning process in Washington. Our consultant/coach, Rich Katt, formerly the state CTE director from Nebraska, met with staff from this agency and SBCTC to begin to scope out a plan for his services. Staff from OSPI will meet with him soon, and he hopes to be able to attend our Board Retreat in June to connect with more partners and stakeholders, and to hear from Board members about their hopes for the next iteration of TAP.
2. The Employment Security Department's 2019 Economic Symposium, held on April 1, was a standout event. There was a significant focus on anticipating and planning for upcoming changes in the economic cycle. In addition to hearing from ESD professionals, there were presentations from the Economic Revenue Forecast Council, Results WA, the Commerce Department, agriculture/healthcare/real estate industry representatives, and private sector economists. Workforce Board staff were conference attendees as well as presenters/moderators in a breakout session on the Future of Work.
3. Last week the National Governors Association (NGA) held a National Summit on Scaling Work-Based Learning. The event was the culmination of the NGA Policy Academy that we've been engaged in since 2016. Nova Gattman co-led the Washington team with Daryl Monear from the Washington Student Achievement Council. The Summit included almost 30 participating states, allowing states to learn from national experts, hear about best practices in scaling work-based learning, and discuss common concerns and brainstorm solutions.

Washington was featured on two panels: Jenee Myers-Twitchell from Washington STEM participated in a breakout session on equity in data, and Nova was on the closing panel along with the state of Alabama to highlight a state at the beginning of its journey to create a system (AL), and our own state as one of the vanguards of the nation in developing a system to increase access to career-connected learning opportunities. Nova provided an overview of the Governor's plan and legislation.

She also shared information about Perry England's and others work on the Career Connect Washington (CCW) Task Force and the business leadership group for CCW, and offered highlights on the success and reach of the local CCW projects managed by ESD.

The Policy Academy project ends May 15 of this year, but NGA is in discussion with the lead funder (Siemens Foundation) about a potential third phase. We'll keep you updated if anything changes. The Policy Academy has been a great catalyst for our state to bring all the partners to the table; an additional round of this work would certainly be helpful as we continue building a strong system.

4. Future of Work: Our FoW Co-Managers, Lew McMurran and Joe Wilcox, have been on an input gathering mission on behalf of the Task Force. They've been traveling the state speaking with numerous public and private organizations about what they are witnessing or experiencing currently because of technological disruptions, and their hopes and fears regarding the changing landscape of work and the workplace, how it impacts businesses, workers, students, government and communities, and gathering their thoughts on potential solution strategies. They have also been poring over a never-ending pile of research, articles, essays, conference reports, etc. that address the future of work. The Future of Work Task Force will convene its first meeting of the year on Thursday, May 9 at Central Washington University in Ellensburg. The Task Force will begin the process to identify policy recommendations for the Legislature, due December 31, 2019. More details at: <http://www.wtb.wa.gov/futureofwork.asp>
5. Advance CTE annual conference for state CTE leaders and partners was held April 8-10 in Washington, D.C. Eric Wolf and I attended and were pleased to be joined by CTE leadership from OSPI and SBCTC. This event is always a good opportunity to learn about the strategies, tactics, and lessons learned from other states. The transition to Perkins V was, of course, on everyone's mind and so the focus of the conference. The conference tag line was "Be Bold." Administration and Congressional representatives were clear that there would be no formal rule-making or prescriptive guidance provided, and that interpretation of the law would be left largely to the states. The new law is intended to support and encourage states to use secondary and postsecondary CTE as a vehicle to reach state economic and workforce goals, and to ensure equitable access to economic opportunity for underrepresented population groups. State CTE plans will be reviewed through this lens. This opens the door to innovative ideas or even total disruption to current systems and structures, with the Board and partners having quite a bit of latitude as they enter the TAP planning process. However, not everyone thrives in such an ambiguous state. We'll have to keep in mind the tension this causes those who have to implement CTE programming, and be held accountable for fiscal integrity and program outcomes.

Eric and I also used our time in D.C. to visit with a couple of Washington's congressional delegates, Rep. Derek Kilmer and Rep. Susan Del Bene. Both have demonstrated their support of workforce development and education investments, and are especially concerned with how federal policy might be used to ensure equitable access to long-term economic security for all individuals. We shared information on TAP and the Future of Work Task Force. We also asked for their support of an increase for the Perkins line item. Advance CTE is proposing a doubling of the federal investment, which hasn't been increased in many years and has not kept up with inflation.

6. The Clean Slate Project: Harvard Law School's Center for Labor and Work Life is undertaking the re-imagining of U.S. employment law. They are building a set of policy recommendations that would support workers in an environment of continuous change and job instability. I was invited to attend a session where they unveiled preliminary recommendations. Attendees participated in a number of facilitated discussions over two days to generate questions and concerns, enhancements, or new ideas to the core team for the next iteration of the recommendations. The topic and the forum were

fascinating, and provided some new dimensions for our Future of Work Task Force to consider. There were a number of funder organizations in attendance interested in supporting pilot efforts that might help test employment law reform concepts in the context of “future of work.”

7. Progress continues at a fast clip on a project to improve the Career Bridge website using discretionary federal WIOA funds. Workforce Board staff are working with a contractor to construct a digital portfolio feature that will allow users to save information they collect on schools, occupations, and education and training programs in one easily accessed place. The new portfolio feature will also allow users to upload key documents, including resumes, work experience, cover letters, and more. We expect to have an initial version of the portfolio feature ready for preliminary usability testing by mid to late May. Staff will be working with high schools, WorkSource centers, and community-based organizations to find counselors, youth, and others to test-drive this feature and make further improvements. It's one piece of a larger project to enhance Career Bridge, including making the site mobile friendly for cell phones and tablets, and translating thousands of the site's featured education programs into new coding that allows them to be readily uploaded to the national credential registry, Credential Engine, among other improvements.